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WHEN WE DESTROYED THE GASPEE

WHEN WE DESTROYED THE GASPEE

A STORY OF

NARRAGANSETT BAY IN 1772

BY

JAMES OTIS

AUTHOR OF

"THE BOYS' REVOLT," "THE BOYS OF 1745,"
"THE SIGNAL BOYS OF '75," ETC.

Illustrated

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WHEN WE DESTROYED THE GASPEE

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NOTE

In 1782 Justin Jacobs wrote a certain number of letters to Daniel Pearce, who had been his shipmate and comrade in 1772.

These missives, still preserved, refer entirely to the destruction of the *Gaspee*, and by their tenor one would fancy that Jacobs was contemplating writing a history of that affair, for he asks his old shipmate to refresh his memory on this point or that concerning minor details of the action.

It is from this correspondence that the present story is formed, and set down after such fashion as one who had read the letters carefully might suppose Jacobs himself would have written the account.

THE AUTHOR.

WORK 10 FEB 30

EXTRACT from a song written in Providence, R. I., in 1772, which gives the history of the destruction of the *Gaspee*, and concludes with the following allusion to the reward offered by the king for the discovery of those concerned in the affair:

"Now, for to find these people out,
King George has offered very stout,
One thousand pounds to find out one
That wounded William Duddington.
One thousand more he says he'll spare,
For those who say the sheriffs were.
One thousand more there doth remain
For to find out the leader's name;
Likewise five hundred pounds per man
For any one of all the clan.
But let him try his utmost skill,
I'm apt to think he never will
Find out any of those hearts of gold,
Though he should offer fifty-fold."

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WHEN WE DESTROYED THE GASPEE

A Story of Narragansett Bay in 1772

CHAPTER I.

THE "HANNAH."

WHEN his Majesty's eight-gun schooner *Gaspee*, commanded by Lieutenant Duddington, first came into Narragansett Bay for the alleged purpose of enforcing the revenue acts along the coast, Daniel Pearce and I, Justin Jacobs, were rated as "ordinary seamen" on board the packet *Hannah*, which craft made as nearly regular trips between New York and Providence as the weather would permit.

Daniel and I were lads, he seventeen and I sixteen years of age, in the year of grace 1772, although we considered ourselves as being nearly men grown, because of the fact that we two made up the entire crew of the *Hannah*.

As a matter of course there was a cook on board, — an old black man by the name of Seth Somers, — and also Cap-

tain Joshua Lindsey, the master; but neither of these can be counted as g[illegible] to make up the crew of the schooner. In other words, Daniel and I were the only two rated as seamen, and because of such fact we gave ourselves, on favourable occasions, high and mighty airs when we were in a home port, which is to say, Providence, or at such times as we lay at Newport, our only stopping-place during the voyage.

In those days I looked upon Captain Josh as one of the best navigators in the country, because he was as familiar with every rock and shoal in Narragansett Bay as with the chicken-coops in his own yard; but having seen more of the world by this time, I am come to realise that the master of the *Hannah* would have been sadly out of his reckoning in any other waters, for he understood nothing whatsoever of the art of navigation, as scholars know it.

However, he was to Daniel and myself the very embodiment of wisdom in anything pertaining to seacraft, for never once did we find him at fault in anything relating to his line of duty.

Our wages were set at sixteen shillings a month, which included, as a matter of course, our food during the entire time, whether on the voyage or lying at port, and old Seth was a rare good cook, such as could readily tickle the appetites of two lads like ourselves, who were ready and eager to eat at all times.

I have seen plum duff set before seamen on a full-rigged ship, which was like so much saw-dust as compared with

that savoury dish which old Seth served to us each day after our arrival in New York or Pro[illegible]ce, as a kind of reward for having brought the *Hannah* safely through such perils of the sea as might have been encountered between the ports.

And the bacon he fried! It was what you could almost call a dream, browned to a delicate tint, and with the fat fried out of it until one might take up a handful of the slices without soiling a glove, if it so chanced he wore one.

It is needless for me to sing old Seth's praises, for all those who travelled by sea in the good packet *Hannah*, whether they were people of quality or ordinary planters, united in declaring that it was well worth the price of the passage money to partake of such meals as the old black fellow cooked, and because of our good cheer there was little or no grumbling when, through stress of weather, we were forced to lie by in some harbour.

We lads had been on board the *Hannah* nearly a year, enjoying ourselves thoroughly despite the hard labour

Captain Josh called upon us to perform, before his Majesty, King George, troubled his head concerning us, and then came our affliction in the shape of the schooner *Gaspee*, carrying eight guns, and commanded by Lieutenant Duddington.

This vessel of the king's was, in the beginning of March, sent to Narragansett Bay by the commissioners of customs at Boston, to prevent the people from breaking the revenue laws, and to put an end to what those gentlemen of Massachusetts were pleased to say was an illicit trade carried on between Newport and Providence.

Illicit trade indeed! Was the king in London to say that law-abiding people should not do this or that which pleased them in the matter of buying or selling goods? Were we to ask his Majesty if we might be permitted to exchange our own truck for that owned by others?

Now I had been taught by my father to believe that whatsoever the king did was right, but when I found him, as in this case, meddling with private matters which could not by any stretch of the imagination concern him, I came to the conclusion that those whom I had heard spoken of as malcontents and rebels were very nearly in the right. When we were forced to heave to and lower our colours every time we chanced to come upon that tub of a *Gaspee*, in order that the high and mighty Lieutenant Duddington could send half a dozen men aboard to search out such little articles as we carried for barter, I decided, as did Daniel Pearce, that it was high time his Majesty came to

understand that we of Rhode Island were not willing to be put upon in such insolent fashion.

However, neither Daniel's opinion nor mine has anything whatsoever to do with that which I have set myself to tell; but in order that it may be fully known why the *Gaspee* was destroyed, it stands me in hand to first set down what was done in Narragansett Bay by this same William Duddington, who called himself the king's lieutenant, and put on more high and mighty airs than by right belonged to the Governor of New York.

He took it upon himself to stop every vessel that entered Narragansett Bay and seize such goods as were on board which struck his fancy, whether a tax should be paid on them or no. In other words, he literally stole from the merchants of Providence and Newport whatsoever pleased him, even going so far as to seize sheep and hogs from the farmers along the coast, and when remonstrated with, cut down fruit-trees in sheer wantonness, alleging that it was to teach the people a lesson in politeness.

The wretch fired upon market-boats, regardless of the fact that they were free by any and every law of the colonies to go and come at pleasure, and behaved with such insolence that the most peaceable of our traders were forced in sheer self-defence to make complaint.

Because of their written outcries, Deputy-Governor Sessions, who lived at Providence, wrote down the list of their grievances, and sent the documents to Governor Wanton at Newport, stating at the same time that in his opinion Lieutenant Duddington of the *Gaspee* had no legal right

to do the half of what he claimed was his lawful business.

Master Joseph Wanton was an honest man, and one who would do what he believed to be his duty regardless of king or people, and although he was at the time, and ever after, charged with being a strict loyalist, his actions in the matter of Duddington's high-handed proceedings showed of what metal he really was.

No sooner had he received the statement from Master Sessions than he sent the high sheriff to Lieutenant Duddington, with the demand that the commander of the *Gaspee* produce his commission then and there, in order that it might be seen whether he had lawful warrant even for the slightest of his offences.

The lieutenant refused to give the sheriff any satisfaction whatsoever, and again did the governor send his officer, this last time with a written order demanding that the commission be produced, or the *Gaspee* leave Narragansett Bay without delay.

High and mighty Lieutenant Duddington, who seemed to think that it was within his province to murder and steal at his heart's content, fell into a terrible fit of rage because any person should dare question his authority, and at once sent Master Wanton's letter to Admiral Montague, a king's officer of high degree, who was stationed at Boston.

This admiral must have been of much the same kidney as Duddington, for he took it upon himself to write a bullying letter to the Governor of Rhode Island, — to the chief

magistrate of a colony of free Englishmen, — and in it claimed that Duddington had done no more than his duty. He also said, and this I have seen printed in black and white:

"I shall report your two insolent letters, addressed to Lieutenant Duddington, to his Majesty's secretaries of state, and leave them to determine what right you have to demand a sight of all orders I shall give to the officers of my squadron, and I would advise you not to send your sheriff on board the king's ship again on such ridiculous errands."

Now, if Admiral Montague thought he could come anywhere near frightening Master Wanton, he was making a big mistake, and but for the fact that we took it into our own hands to do away with the *Gaspee*, I'll warrant you the admiral would have got such a wigging as must have lowered his crest a good many inches.

I have also seen printed a copy of the letter which our governor wrote to this same puffed-up, bawling admiral, and in it, according to my way of thinking, he gave the king's officer as good as had been sent, with something to spare, for among other things he said:

"I am greatly obliged for the promise of transmitting

my letters to the secretaries of state. I am, however, a little shocked at your impolite expression made use of on that occasion. In return for this good office I shall also transmit your letter to the secretary of state, and leave to the king and his ministers to determine on which side the charge of insolence lies. As to your advice not to send the sheriff on board any of your squadron, please to know that I will send the sheriff of this colony at any time and to any place, within the body of it, as I shall see fit."

Now to prove more thoroughly that this fellow Duddington was such a person as could not be tolerated in any law-abiding colony, let me here set down that Governor Wanton believed the matter to be of so serious a nature as to demand some action by the Assembly, and, after he had read to that body of gentlemen a copy of the instructions given the sheriff when he boarded the *Gaspee*, as well as the letters sent to Admiral Montague, and the reply from the naval officer, the Assembly voted that the account of the whole matter be laid before the Earl of Hillsborough, with the belief that the cock of the armed schooner would get his comb cut.

Before Master Wanton had time to hear from England, we of the colony had put an end to the *Gaspee*, and come so near sending into eternity the miserable wretch who commanded her, that the king's ministers lost sight of the governor's complaint entirely in their attempts to find out who had given Lieutenant Duddington the lesson he so sorely needed.

All this was in March, as you must understand, and those who traversed the waters of Narragansett Bay were forced to obey such orders as the high and mighty lieutenant was pleased to give, until that certain ninth day of June, when we put an end to any interference with our business, and showed the king's ministers that we were not to be bullied by such cattle as commanded the armed schooner.

In fact I believe, and it is also the opinion of older men, that Duddington was more insolent and overbearing after the exchange of letters between our governor and the king's admiral, than before. He made it a point to stop any wherries that might be going from one part of the bay to another, and even ships' boats which were putting off and on from the shore, while day by day the farmers complained that their live stock was being seized by the seamen of the *Gaspee*, who would give no satisfaction whatsoever, neither by way of warrants for payment, or the showing of orders from their commander.

To put it in plain words, and yet not speak too harshly, the *Gaspee* was become a pirate, and as such a most serious and vicious menace to the people of the colony, who lived nearabout the shore of the bay.

It is needless for me to set down an account of all which was done by Duddington, because his deeds are well known even at this day, and therefore I come back to the *Hannah*, for she it was who led the pirate into that situation where he could easily be destroyed.

It was on the noon of June 9th that we left Newport

for the home port with a fresh southerly breeze. We had on board eight passengers, mostly merchants from Providence, among whom were Masters John Brown, Benjamin Dunn, and Joseph Bucklin, which gives you a taste of the quality we carried.

The voyage from New York had been what one might call speedy, and when we got under way on this particular day, all hands were in the best of spirits, for old Seth had really outdone himself in the way of dinner, which was extremely satisfactory to those who partook of it when served aft, as well as to Daniel Pearce and myself, who got the odds and ends as fast as they were brought forward.

I question if a better contented, more peaceable lot of passengers, and the same may be said of the crew, ever sailed up Narragansett Bay, for when one's stomach is filled to repletion, the ordinary disagreeables of life are generally forgotten.

We knew full well that the *Hannah* would be overhauled by the *Gaspee*, but were in that frame of mind when it seemed of but little consequence, although, perchance, there might be an entire change of feeling if the arrogant Duddington should take it upon himself to seize any portion of the cargo.

However, as I have said, we did not look into the future then, but lounged about the deck at will, for the wind was favouring, and no man need raise his hand to aid in the progress of the voyage, save he who stood at the helm.

As a matter of course our colours were flying, for it was

Captain Lindsey's custom to raise them when we entered Newport harbour, and leave them mastheaded from that time until we were made fast at the dock at Providence.

As should be the case on all well-appointed packets, to prevent the odour of the food from disturbing the passengers, the cook's galley was located just aft of the foremast.

Lying on the deck, in front of the door, listening to the yarns old Seth was ready to spin whenever he had a listener, we lads lounged idly about after dinner, saying to ourselves that by sunset, at the latest, we should be at the dock in Providence, for the southerly breeze continued to freshen until the *Hannah* had all the wind she needed. The passage from Newport promised to be the quickest we had ever made.

In the hope of eclipsing all previous voyages, Captain Lindsey himself stood at the helm, for there was in his mind the idea that he could give points to any man who ever lived, in the matter of steering a packet; therefore it was that, from the time we passed Gold Island, neither my shipmate nor I had been called on to so much as raise a hand.

As I have said, everything on board spoke of satisfaction and content when we left Hog Island and were come into the upper end of the bay, between Bristol and Greenwich.

Old Seth was deep in his yarn spinning, which chanced at that moment to be concerning some marvellous adventure of his in New York, when he had saved himself from

being made prisoner, on a charge of disorderly conduct, by whipping three of the watch single-handed.

The merchants were discussing business, I fancied, to judge from the expression on their faces, and Captain Josh, proud as any peacock because of the speed the packet was making, stood at the tiller, looking astern now and then to make certain the wake which we left behind us was as straight and true as a skilful helmsman could draw it.

I was looking aft, although listening to old Seth, when I saw the captain point out some object to the passengers, who immediately rose to their feet, and, as a matter of course, I also stood up in order to learn what might have hove in sight.

Daniel, who made it a strict rule never to exert himself, save when it was absolutely necessary, asked what I could see.

"It is the *Gaspee*," I replied. "She's just coming out from Greenwich, I should fancy, and Captain Josh can set it down as a fact, that the voyage from Newport won't be made in such remarkably short time, because most likely we'll be called upon to heave to presently. That puffed-up lieutenant, who is all epaulets and no brains, would feel sad if he couldn't stick his nose into our hold and smell out whatsoever we have on board which might tickle his fancy."

"If I was the captain of this packet, it would take more than a schooner of eight guns to heave me to this day," Daniel said, so far forgetting his rule as to show some

little anger and excitement. "The *Hannah* could run around the *Gaspee* a dozen times between here and Providence, with the wind we've got now."

"But she couldn't run 'roun' one ob de shot, Danny," old Seth said, with a grin.

"There would be little danger of shot coming aboard if Captain Josh headed straight up the river, unless we're close within range now," Daniel replied, and I added:

"She's a good two miles to port, and I'll go bail there isn't a gun aboard the old tub that could send a ball half that distance. It begins to look as if Captain Josh was much of your way of thinking, Daniel. He's bearing a bit more to the eastward."

My shipmate rose indolently to his feet and gazed over the port rail, from which point of vantage he might see the king's schooner coming toward us with a bone in her teeth, and one could easily fancy that the lieutenant who strained himself to put on so many airs was pacing to and fro on the quarter-deck, wondering what we meant by edging off instead of heaving to submissively while he sent a crew aboard to search us.

"Ef de cap'n's gwine fur ter play any tricks on a vessel wha's got eight guns all ready to sink us, I'se boun' to look arter myse'f," and old Seth suddenly disappeared in the galley, closing the door behind him, as if believing that, once hidden from view, he was sheltered from every possible danger.

"Come out of there, you fool nigger!" Daniel cried, with a laugh. "In case a shot should come aboard of us,

you'd be worse off there than in the open, for your galley would be knocked to splinters, which are more dangerous than an iron ball, because of scattering in every direction."

"I'se gwine fur ter stay right whar I is, Danny, an' don' you count on interferin' wid de cook, kase he's no fightin' man. Ef Lieutenant Duddington wants fur ter swell 'roun' de bay, lettin' off his guns when dere ain't no 'casion fur firin' ob 'em, den I'se countin' on keepin' out'er sight."

"You may as well watch the chase, for that's what it's going to be," I cried, thinking it would be a shame if Seth lost any portion of the spectacle through his reasonless fears.

"There's no danger of their putting a shot aboard of us so long as the wind holds," Daniel added.

After some urging Seth opened the door a few inches and peered through the aperture; but no words of mine could persuade him to venture out on deck, so fearful was the old negro of what the commander of the *Gaspee* might do, and, indeed, one could hardly blame him for being cautious after all the stories he had heard concerning the lieutenant's arrogance and brutality.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHASE.

AT this point let me set down what was the general opinion of all hands on board the *Hannah* when Captain Lindsey made plain his intention of running away from the *Gaspee*, lest some of those faultfinding loyalists should claim that it was our duty to obey every command which might be given by the representatives of the king.

Lieutenant Duddington had been sent into Narragansett Bay by Admiral Montague with orders, as was stated in Boston, to prevent illicit trading.

Now, in pursuance of this duty, it was, of course, necessary for him to heave to any strange craft, even though it might be one as small as a wherry; but our captain claimed, as did all his passengers, that after having been stopped each day for the past three months, as we worked in or out of the river, the arrogant lieutenant must have become so well acquainted with the *Hannah* by this time, even though her colours had not been flying, as to know that we were engaged in strictly lawful business.

He could not have claimed that the *Gaspee* was so far distant as to render it impossible for him to decide whether

she was really the New York packet or a stranger, for our house flag was flying, and this in itself should have been sufficient to let him understand exactly who we were.

If he proposed to heave us to, it was only for the sake of showing his authority, if indeed he had any, and might be classed as a piece of wanton mischief, for, view it as you may, it is a serious matter to delay a packet which carries passengers, and letters sent by post.

All this I have set down, perhaps needlessly, for throughout the country generally at the time was it known full well that the lieutenant had no valid reason for overhauling us; but yet I am eager to make the point plain, in order that he who reads will be able to deny any statement made to the effect that Captain Lindsey should have brought his vessel around when the *Gaspee* first hove in sight, if he laid any claim to being a law-abiding citizen.

For the first time since the king's vessel had made her appearance for the purpose of ferreting out evil-doers, did the *Hannah* have her at a disadvantage. We were beyond range of her guns, and, being a swifter craft, could gain a

mile or more every hour, for the packet's best point of sailing was before the wind.

If I except old Seth, who was thinking only of his own precious skin, it is safe to say that every one on board approved of Captain Lindsey's intention to show the *Gaspee* our heels, and even Master Brown, the staidest and most respectable merchant in Providence, was literally dancing to and fro on the quarter-deck in his excitement, caused by the prospect of showing the lieutenant what we might do in a strictly lawful way.

It can well be fancied that the high and mighty Duddington was in a towering rage when he saw the packet standing boldly up toward the river without doing reverence to his lordship, and this we understood when he fired one of his bow guns, the shot sending up a jet of water midway between the two vessels.

This was a peremptory demand for us to heave to; and even old Seth laughed at the idea that Captain Lindsey would obey such a summons.

The lieutenant might spend all the ammunition he had on board without doing us any harm; but when the second signal was fired, and our captain responded only by edging a little farther to the eastward, there came into my mind the question as to what might happen to us in the future as punishment for thus disobeying his orders written in gunpowder.

We were bound to leave Providence once each week, if the weather permitted of our making the round voyage in that length of time, and sooner or later the *Gaspee* would

be in position to bring the *Hannah* to, or sink her. Then would come the time when, in his disregard of all legal rights, he might make reprisals for what we were doing this day; but not until then, for we all understood that, however powerful the lieutenant believed himself to be, he would not venture to attack us in port, because there was no love for him by the citizens of Providence or Newport.

Within half an hour the veriest landsman among us could see that we were gaining, and if the commander of the *Gaspee* had been wise, his vessel would have been turned about in search of some other prey.

The passengers were talking eagerly among themselves, as I could see by their gestures, and, desirous of knowing what opinions there were among them on this question of defying one of his majesty's vessels, I went somewhat farther aft, where it would be possible to hear what was said. Surely if the foremost citizens of the town believed it right to disobey the order which had been given by the discharge of the gun, then might I cast aside all fear regarding the future.

Master Brown was holding forth on the matter when I was sufficiently near to overhear his words, and he claimed that we were well within our rights, proving it, according to his own ideas, by saying warmly to Captain Lindsey, who had evidently been taking no part in the argument:

"If it so be you let yonder scoundrel delay us, then will I set up a packet-boat myself, putting her under the command of one who has pluck enough to hold to his rights."

"But I don't count on letting him bring us to," Captain Josh replied, with a laugh. "In fact, just at this minute there has come into my mind the idea of serving the lieutenant such a trick as he won't forget for many a day."

"And what may that be?" Master Bucklin asked, curiously.

"I won't begin to brag too soon, for if the lieutenant knows only half as much of seamanship as he claims, the *Gaspee* will soon be put about; but in case it so chance he continues the chase, then will I show you gentlemen a trick which shall prove that I am not faint-hearted when there's occasion for displaying courage."

Such talk as this was a riddle to me; but I knew Captain Josh well enough to believe he saw his way clear to some disagreeable trick upon the king's vessel, else would he have held his tongue, for he was not a man prone to do much in the way of idle boasting.

"If you can give his pride a tumble in any way whatsoever, I'll stand the cost of a dinner for all hands, wherever it may please the company to take it, and no reasonable expense shall be spared," Master Dunn cried, as he gazed first at the armed schooner and then at our captain, who was holding the *Hannah* to her course without the variation of a hand's breath.

"In case he should be so foolish as to follow me, you shall see him in a pickle which won't be pleasing to his master, the admiral at Boston. I'm certain the *Gaspee* draws ten inches more water than does our schooner, and —"

Captain Lindsey did not finish the sentence, but broke off abruptly, as if fearing to say too much, and I, who considered myself somewhat well acquainted with the

waters of the bay, believed it was possible to give a fairly good guess as to what kind of a rod was in pickle for the king's officer.

The chase was more interesting to us, I fancy, than to those on board the *Gaspee*, for it was not necessary

we should speculate as to the result, because, short of carrying away our spars, and there was hardly wind enough to provoke any such accident, we were certain of running up the river a good four miles in advance, providing his Majesty's vessel was able to pursue us that far.

We spent our time trying to decide how much we gained every fifteen minutes, and in picturing to ourselves the anger in which the valiant lieutenant was unquestionably indulging, making a pleasuring out of what, under slightly different circumstances, might have promised dire disaster.

Even old Seth forgot his fears and came out on deck to shake his black fist in the direction of the pursuer, as he ridiculed the idea of attempting to overhaul the *Hannah* in such a breeze.

In fact, it was as enjoyable an afternoon as I ever spent, because we were reducing the debt of insolence which had been accumulating since Lieutenant Duddington came into Narragansett Bay, and the conclusion of the sport fitted well with the beginning.

Having learned beyond the shadow of a doubt that he could hold the *Gaspee* in play as best suited him, Captain Lindsey gave a trifle more zest to the chase by standing over to the westward, and thus slightly decreasing the distance between us, whereupon Master Brown asked, with somewhat of a tremor in his voice:

"What are you doing now? It isn't safe to lose any advantage whatsoever, and although I am no seaman, it is

evident you are giving the king's vessel much encouragement."

"That is exactly what I counted on doing, Master Brown. There is in my mind a fear that the fellow may haul off, finding it impossible to come up with us, and I would hold out such inducements as will carry him well up to Namquit Point."[1]

Now it was that my suspicions of a few moments previous were resolved into a certainty, for I understood exactly what Captain Lindsey would do if, perchance, Lieutenant Duddington was willing to drop into the plot.

Let it be remembered that the tide was ebbing, for that was an important factor in what afterward came to pass.

It was an hour after high water when we first sighted the *Gaspee*, and perhaps forty minutes later when the *Hannah* was off Namquit Point, which, at this stage of the tide, was entirely covered by water.

I observed the captain closely when we were come thus far, and saw that he kept his eyes fixed intently upon the landmarks, never allowing his attention to be distracted from them a single instant, thereby showing that it was his purpose to run the *Hannah* as near the shoal of the point as possible without her taking ground.

To one who was but slightly acquainted with the bay, as in the case of Lieutenant Duddington, it must have appeared as if the captain of the *Hannah* was confident that he could cross the point on whatsoever course he

[1] Now Gaspee Point.

pleased, and unless the king's officer had a better navigator on board than I believed probable, the *Gaspee* was like to come to grief.

Then, to further deceive our pursuer, the packet was brought considerably to the westward immediately we had rounded the shoal of the point, and this manœuvre so far lessened the distance between the vessels, that hardly more than a mile separated them.

This was the moment when the angry commander of the king's vessel might be tempted into a grievous error, and I watched eagerly the approaching craft, unable to restrain a shout of joy as I saw her bow swing around until she was coming on a direct line for us.

Such a course would bring them well up on the point, where, at that time, could be no more than two feet of water, and to take ground on the ebb tide meant serious trouble for him who had, during the three months past, given his entire attention to troubling others.

"It's all right, Master Dunn!" Captain Lindsey said, triumphantly, as he looked astern. "The dinners of which you spoke will be won in less than twenty minutes, save it so be Duddington has on board some one who knows this shore."

Even now the passengers failed to understand fully what Captain Lindsey meant, and looked astern in open-mouthed astonishment, much as if predicting evil, when it appeared that the schooner had gained a decided advantage over us.

Daniel Pearce, indolent though he was by nature, dis-

played his joy by turning somersaults on the deck forward, and old Seth stood by the port rail, grinning with delight, until his mouth was like unto the entrance of a bear's cave.

Captain Lindsey said no more than I have already set down ; but when he stood astride the tiller to steady it, and deliberately lighted his pipe, I knew he was satisfied beyond a peradventure that the trick would be played in proper fashion.

Steadily the *Gaspee* kept her course, and I suppose the thick-headed lieutenant, who had lorded it over us so long, believed that in a few moments he would be able to *pitch* a shot into the *Hannah;* but before five minutes had passed the situation was better understood.

Then it was that the *Gaspee*, bringing up with a jerk as she struck the shoal of the point, heeled over for an instant as the wind came in puffs and forced her yet farther up on the sand. After that she lay nearly on her beam-ends, helpless, and even a landsman might have seen that she must perforce remain in the same situation until the spring tides should set her free.

Now it was that the passengers joined me in my shouts of rejoicing, for they understood the "trick" to a nicety.

Master Dunn seized Captain Lindsey by both hands and shook them violently, as if trying to dislocate his wrists, while the remainder of the gentlemen gave vent to such boisterous expressions of joy that one would have said a party of boys were indulging in childish merriment.

I would I might set down here all that was said in praise of the *Hannah's* captain because of having thus put the detested craft into such a predicament; but every man on board talked as fast as he did gleefully, and as loud as was the satisfaction in his heart, until one might

fill a dozen books, and yet not find room to put in them all the words which were spoken.

At the moment there was no thought in the minds of any that we had done other than give the high and mighty Lieutenant Duddington considerable trouble, with a very good chance for a reprimand from his superior, and indeed that was sufficient for the present.

In obedience to the wishes of the passengers, we hauled around more to the eastward once more, and stood off and on so that we might keep in sight as long as possible the *Gaspee*, while she lay helpless upon the shoal.

"Is there any chance she could be floated at the next flood tide?" Master Brown asked, thoughtfully, and Captain Lindsey shook his head decidedly:

"She will lie there ten days at the shortest, and even then I'm of the opinion that it will be necessary to lighten her considerably, for the schooner is bound to make a bed for herself in the sand, and thus shut out more completely the chance of getting into deep water. You need have no further fears, gentlemen, that Lieutenant Duddington can do any mischief for some time to come."

"It's a pity we couldn't put a final stop to his insolence, for while the *Gaspee* lies as she does, no very great force would be needed to destroy her."

I looked at Master Brown in surprise, wondering if it could be possible there was in his mind so much of rebellion against the king as would lead him to advise the destruction of one of his Majesty's vessels.

There were others on board the *Hannah* besides myself who caught full at the significance of the merchant's words, and in a twinkling, as it were, those gentlemen, who had been displaying their joy by the most extravagant gestures, grew silent and thoughtful.

I was literally dumb with astonishment at the mere intimation that we of Narragansett Bay might go so far as to brave the king's anger, and, hardly conscious of what

I did, walked forward to where Daniel and Seth were grinning in derision at the helpless *Gaspee.*

"Did you hear what Master Brown said just now?" I asked, and Daniel looked upon me in surprise.

"What he said?" he repeated. "One must have been deaf who didn't hear the words which all of them shouted."

"But I am meaning that remark which he made to the captain at this moment."

"What was it?"

"Not so much in the words themselves, but in the meaning his voice gave to them, for I fancy he suggested that now would be the time for us of the colony to put a final end to the king's schooner."

"What?" Daniel cried in amazement. "Did he say that we should take possession of her?"

"Not in so many words; but I believe there was in his mind the thought that we might, while she lies helpless upon the shoal, by gathering a force sufficient, either take possession of, or destroy her."

"Then he didn't really say so?" Daniel exclaimed, with a long-drawn sigh of relief. "You are given overly much to imagination, Justin, and twist other peoples' words to suit your thoughts."

"But in this case there was no twisting, for all the others appeared to understand Master Brown as did I. Do you see how silent they are, as if some great anxiety had come upon them?"

"Men who have grown so rich as Masters Brown, or Bucklin, or Dunn, would never for a moment dream of

violence, especially such violence as must be accompanied by bloodshed," Daniel said, emphatically, and with a decision which staggered me, because he cast aside so utterly my opinions.

"Come farther aft with me, where we can overhear what is said, and then I'll warrant you'll know whether I'm twisting another's words to my thoughts or not."

The lad did as I suggested, and when we stood as near the quarter-deck as it was allowed the crew of the vessel to go, we saw that our passengers were not only grown grave, but silent.

No one spoke. The captain held the tiller in his hands, and was now heading the *Hannah* straight on her course up the river; but wearing such an expression as I had never before seen on his face.

Daniel understood by this time that I had not been making idle talk, for of a verity were our passengers strangely distraught, when one considers to what a pitch of joy they had been lately raised.

We two lads stood five minutes or more listening in vain for some words which might prove or give the lie to my statements, and I was on the point of going forward once more, when Master Dunn said, as if continuing the argument:

"The *Gaspee* must carry a crew of forty or more, and to make the attack on her not less than seventy-five men will be required in order that it should be successful."

Then Master Bucklin pricked up his ears as if he had but just begun to understand what Master Brown had

previously said, and cried, in a tone which was very like fear:

"You are talking little less than treason when you speak of attacking the king's ship, particularly while she lies at your mercy."

Whereupon Master Brown replied, with a dry laugh which had in it little of mirth:

"The word treason is like to be bandied about freely within the next two years, if the king and his ministers continue to put upon us of the colonies as they have been doing. It is four years now since we have been forced to support his Majesty's soldiers sent to hold us in closer subjection, and the same length of time has passed since those men of North Carolina, who loved their country better than they loved their lives, arose in armed rebellion against Governor Tryon, calling themselves 'Regulators,' and 'Sons of Liberty.' If there are in the South hearts stout enough to resist oppression, and men of sufficient courage in Boston to show that they cannot with impunity be held as slaves, then truly we of Rhode Island might make some exhibition of our manhood."

It set one's blood a-boiling to hear such words as these from that citizen of Providence whom all respected, and although I had been taught that the acts of the king should never be questioned, there was in my heart at the moment a most intense desire to strike a blow which would compare in some slight degree with what had already been done in the colonies.

Even Daniel seemed fired with the idea of making an

attack upon the *Gaspee*, and he gripped my hand until I was like to cry aloud with pain, saying at the same time:

"If it so be Master Brown advises that we make the attack upon the *Gaspee*, I can do my share toward raising him a hundred or more brave lads who will follow in his footsteps."

"But what would come after the attack?" I asked, now plunged into a maze of bewilderment. "To what end should we strike a blow? It is of little moment that we show our detestation of that insolent lieutenant."

"Ay, you are right, Justin. I know not how it might benefit us," Daniel said, helplessly, and straightway I fell to wondering why Master Brown should have spoken so vehemently.

CHAPTER III.

GATHERING THE FORCE.

IT appeared to me much as if our passengers were at first alarmed by the bold talk which Master Brown made, but, growing more accustomed to the idea, as it were, began to look with favour upon something of the kind, even going so far as to decide the general purport of the attack.

While loitering near the break of the quarter, for I was grown so excited that it seemed impossible to remain quietly forward in my proper place, I heard Master Dunn say, as if speaking of some ordinary matter of business:

"The schooner should first be captured, and after that has been done we can decide what ought to be done with her," whereupon Captain Lindsey said, for the purpose of testing the temper of his passengers, I fancy, rather than to bring about a discussion:

"You would have forty or more prisoners on hand in event of that, Master Dunn, and think you the time is ripe for depriving of their liberty those who serve the king?"

"That is but a detail of the affair, which can best be settled when we hold a consultation, for if it is decided to display what may well be called treason, I would that we

had the principal citizens of Providence on our side. Once they are called together, let the course be settled. However, I see no reason why, in case we should capture the schooner, the officers and crew might not be sent away in their boats."

I could well understand from the expression on his face that Captain Lindsey was thoroughly in favour of some such enterprise as Master Brown had suggested; but it pleased him at the moment to find bugbears to perplex his passengers, who were again working themselves into a fine state of excitement, for he said:

"It is to be supposed that the crew of the schooner will fight, Master Dunn, and you will not be able to find arms for as large a party as seems necessary should be gathered to do the work."

"That is another of the details which can be disposed of by the majority of the people," the merchant replied, thus showing that he was fully determined for the enterprise, and careless as to how others might decide upon carrying it forward.

All this while that our passengers were discussing, in a general way, what might or should be done to the king's vessel, the *Hannah* was rapidly lessening the distance which lay between her and the home port, and nothing of importance had been decided upon when we were rounding the point which brought us into view of the town.

But a short time remained for these gentlemen to settle the preliminaries, and Master Bucklin must have had such fact in his mind when he said, quietly:

"It is necessary that the citizens be gotten together at an early hour, for despite Captain Lindsey's assertion that the *Gaspee* cannot be floated until the spring tides, it is possible she may come off at the next flood, therefore I ask how you gentlemen propose to warn the people of the business on hand?"

"How we propose?" Master Dunn repeated, with somewhat of irritation in his tones. "Am I to understand, sir, that you don't intend to join with us in the venture?"

"I stand ready to do whatsoever is within my power," Master Bucklin replied, gravely; "but not being versed in such matters, I count on holding myself as one of the subordinates, leaving those better able than I to decide how the work shall be carried out. Furthermore, I am quite positive that every gentleman here is of much the same opinion as myself, which is to say, that the king's schooner must be captured, in order to put an end to the vexations caused by her presence in Narragansett Bay."

Every man on the quarter-deck stepped forward to show that he was as ready to take part in the enterprise as was Master Bucklin, and I, believing that we were the same as beginning war against the king, grew absolutely dizzy, so that I was fain to lean against the rail for support, because it seemed to me as if the citizens of Providence were about to undertake that which would cost the lives of many.

"There should be some meeting-place decided upon," Captain Lindsey said, after a brief pause, "and I take it upon myself to say that James Sabine will give up the

main room in his house, which is as yet unfurnished, for such a purpose. What do you say, Master Brown, to inviting the citizens there at about eight o'clock this evening?"

"I am agreed, captain; but how shall we make such invitation publicly known?"

"Here are two lads," the captain said, pointing toward Daniel and myself, "who have nothing whatsoever to do save warn the citizens. They shall go on shore immediately we are made fast, and there spread the news."

This counting us lads in as members of the force that was to capture the king's vessel, so excited Daniel that he piped up, shrilly:

"If it please you, captain, I have a drum at home, and can go about the streets beating it while Justin cries out in a loud voice that the *Gaspee* is ashore at Namquit Point, and all who are ready to make a try at capturing her shall gather at James Sabine's house."

"Now of a verity has the lad some sense, although his face makes but little show of it," Master Brown said, quickly and approvingly, as he turned suddenly upon Daniel, whose cheeks grew rosy red at what I thought a

poor apology for a compliment. "Let it be done as he suggests, and I will myself call upon Captain Abraham Whipple, the one among all in Providence who is capable to take the command of such an expedition. If he thinks well of the venture, and I even dare to promise in his name, upon him shall be the duty of getting together a sufficient number of boats, while you, Lindsey, are to set about enlisting the best known shipmasters in the town, each of whom shall have charge of one of the craft, for we must go in approved and orderly fashion, lest we come to grief."

This putting the scheme into something like shape acted as a spur upon all the others aboard, and each had some suggestion to make regarding this detail or that, until by the time the *Hannah* was come alongside her dock the general outlines of the plan had been decided upon.

Such boats as could be pressed into service were to be brought to Fenner's Wharf, near where Master Arnold lived, and Captain Lindsey took it upon himself to see that each craft was supplied with oars and rudders.

I noted too, with some surprise, that as yet nothing had been said in regard to the weapons which were to be used. Surely that was one of the most important matters for consideration, because how could a force of even one hundred men hope to succeed empty-handed against forty or more who had not only muskets, but cutlasses; with at least eight cannons, and all the ammunition which might be needed?

"You'se gwine ter come ter some drefful end," old Seth said, when Daniel and I, puffed up with pride because we had thus been counted among the men of the town, swaggered past the galley. "You chillun tink you'se gwine for ter walk right aboard the king's ship jes' like you was home. Wha' you count dat lieutenant's gwine ter be doin' all dis yere time? He don' 'low for to let hisself be took prisoner wifout he makes a mighty strong kind ob a kick."

"He can't help himself when once we're ready to carry out the work," Daniel said, valiantly. "The *Gaspee* is aground, and we can run up alongside in whatsoever fashion pleases us."

"Dat's right, honey, dat's all stric' truff; but I axes yer wha's de lieutenant gwine to be doin' when you'se runnin' up 'longside? Tell me dat?"

"He may make some fuss; but when he sees all the citizens of Providence before him, he'll back down mighty quick, and be as humble as a lamb."

"You'll fin', honey, he'll be de kin' ob a lamb what'll make a mighty strong fight, 'case he ain't gwine back ter Boston sayin's how de folks from dis yere town come out an' took his vessel away from him. I 'spec's dere'll be hot work, an' you'se makin' ready for de day ob judgment."

Old Seth was particularly friendly with Daniel and myself, and I believe he was trying to frighten us from the venture lest we come to some harm, for indeed, when one looked at the matter calmly, it did appear to be a most

dangerous undertaking, even though we from Providence should be well armed.

I could understand that the commander of such a vessel as the *Gaspee* might well feel himself disgraced by surrendering his ship to a party of citizens who were supposed to know nothing whatsoever of warfare, and therefore was it reasonable to believe he would fight until the last.

The more I viewed the matter from a disinterested standpoint, the wilder did the scheme appear.

To boil it down into cold facts, the gentlemen on board the *Hannah* proposed to raise a hundred or more to capture the schooner. This force, large as it might seem in comparison with the crew of the *Gaspee*, would be in open boats, while the enemy — meaning those men under Lieutenant Duddington's command — were well armed, and sheltered by the hull of their schooner.

Clearly, so it began to seem to me, the odds would be against us, and yet, although I never was, and probably never shall be, noted for my courage, there was no thought in my mind of leaving the work to others. I proposed to do my full share, and was proud because Daniel and I had been selected to warn the people of the meeting at Master Sabine's house.

The *Hannah* arrived at her dock about six o'clock in the afternoon, and straightway all her passengers dispersed, each bent on performing this or that portion of the work of preparing for the venture.

There was no excitement, no loud words, no swaggering, and I fancied that they, like myself, in considering the

matter calmly, had come to realise how much of danger there was in it, despite the fact that the king's schooner lay virtually at our mercy.

On every other day when we arrived in port, Captain Lindsey saw to it carefully that Daniel and I furled the sails in shipshape fashion, cleared up the decks, and otherwise put the packet into proper condition, before we were allowed to step foot on shore.

On this night, however, there was no thought in the captain's mind regarding the appearance of his vessel. Immediately after the hawsers had been run out, and even while the passengers were clambering over the rail to the dock, he said to me, hurriedly:

"You lads are to go ashore and begin the task of telling the people that which is about to be done, as quickly as possible. Seth shall look after the ship and put her to rights, for I do not fancy he will care to take a hand in this night's work."

"'Deed I don', cap'n," the old negro, having overheard the conversation, cried shrilly. "I'se nebber gwine fur ter stick dis yere ole head into trubble for de sake ob payin' off dat yere lieutenant. Dere's plenty ob worry ahead fur me ef I'se got to do all de work on dis yere ship 'tween now an' mornin' wifout chile or chick to help me. When yer uncle Seth shipped aboard de packet, he 'lowed she was a fust-class vessel, an' he was gwine fur ter be de cook; but when yer come ter gettin' all dis yere rumption in yer head 'bout capturin' ships, you counts on him fur ter do de work."

"You can well afford to snug down, Seth, seeing's how you're not called upon to do anything more until breakfast time. We'll be 'round here 'twixt eight or nine o'clock and get a bite of something to eat; but you needn't set the table, or anything of that kind, you know."

The captain could have said nothing which would have aroused the old man's anger more quickly than to propose that he dispense with the formality of getting supper, for Seth was jealous of his reputation as a cook, and whosoever failed to eat as much and as often as he thought proper, displeased him very decidedly.

He was yet scolding shrilly when Daniel and I went over the rail, bent on getting the drum to attract attention, and then setting about the task of making known the condition of the *Gaspee*.

Half an hour later we were marching up one street and down another, my comrade drumming furiously until we were come to a dwelling, when I would make an announcement something after this fashion:

"The schooner *Gaspee* was run ashore by the packet *Hannah* on Namquit Point, and all the good people are requested to come to the house of Master James Sabine, there to decide on what may be done toward capturing the vessel which has caused so much annoyance in Narragansett Bay."

When this had been spoken at the full strength of my lungs, Daniel would beat his drum furiously until we were in front of the next dwelling, when I repeated the information.

In this manner we went from house to house, and from shop to tavern, until I venture to say that by eight o'clock in the evening all the citizens of Providence, whatever their station, their age, or their political opinion, knew that the *Gaspee* was like to be captured — that we of Rhode Island were about to follow the example of those in North Carolina, and declare ourselves against such servants of the king as ventured to oppress us.

By this time we were sufficiently hungry to do full justice to Seth's skill as cook. However strong my desire to join in the attack upon the king's vessel, I could not resist the cravings of my appetite, therefore it was I proposed we go on board the *Hannah*.

Daniel made no protest, although he as well as I was eager to be on hand when the meeting at Master Sabine's house should be first opened, in order that we might get in mind all the details which should be settled upon.

Hurriedly we ran down to the dock, and on going aboard the packet found the old cook in a very disagreeable humour.

"I done 'lowed you chillun would come crawlin' 'roun' fer sometin' ter eat 'fore a great while; but now I'se des gwine to shet up de pantry. Supper's done gone finished two hours ago. Do you 'spec's I'se gwine fur ter work my han's down to de bone doin' sailorman's work an' den cook fer two ravenin' wolves like you? I'se des gwine ter leave dis yere ship an' get 'mong 'spectable people."

Having had experience with Seth during his moments

of ill temper, we held our peace, until he was come to the end of his grumbling, and then I said that which I knew full well would restore him to something nearly approaching good temper.

"You know, Seth, that we can't get anything to eat ashore that'll compare with what you cook, and so we came back. I suppose we should have managed to get along after a fashion this night, but how could we hold out when we thought of what might be had aboard the *Hannah?* Don't bother about us, but give me the key of the pantry, and I'll find enough. Cold food of your cooking goes ahead of the best hot grub to be found in Providence."

"You 'spec's I'se gwine fur ter hab you rummagin' 'roun' my pantry, chile? Put youse'f right down dar while I fixes up a little mess fer de good ob yer

stomach. Ole Seth ain't gwine fer ter starbe a couple ob chillun."

Then he set about warming some of the meat that had been left over from dinner; mixing up this dish and mincing that, until, within fifteen minutes, Daniel and I were seated before as appetising a meal as one could desire, and full justice we did to it.

While we ate, the cook did his best to dissuade us from our purpose, setting forth all the dangers which might be encountered, and challenging us to show what benefit was to be gained, even though the venture could be carried through without bloodshed.

His arguments were strong and convincing; we could not explain why it would be well to capture the schooner, yet, because of the part taken by those citizens who stood highest in the estimation of all, did we believe it was something which must be done beyond a peradventure.

Therefore, in spite of Seth's entreaties, for he finally fell to coaxing us, we left the packet and bent our way toward Master Sabine's home.

It was past eight o'clock when we arrived, but yet, although more than a hundred were present, the meeting was not opened, because several of the leaders had failed to arrive; therefore we missed nothing of the preparation.

When Master Brown came into the house, ten minutes later, he called the assembly to order, and briefly stated what I have already set down regarding the grounding of the *Gaspee*, continuing by saying that now was come the time when, if the people of Narragansett Bay would but

pluck up a little courage, they might rid themselves of that visitor which had caused so much annoyance, and even distress.

"We of Providence and the towns nearabout are treated as malefactors, inasmuch as this Admiral Montague considers it necessary to set an armed vessel before our doors to watch us," he said in conclusion. "We may not even cross the river in a small boat without being forced to come alongside a vessel of war to explain our purpose in leaving home, and yet it is claimed that the rule of the king is just! Let those who are willing to give an account of themselves to every whipper-snapper wearing epaulets whom the king may send among us, go at once to their homes, for they can serve no purpose by remaining. But such as are willing to prove their manhood and their rights to the lands they have settled upon, are to remain and say what shall be done this night."

Not a person left the room, and, with a look of satisfaction upon his face, the merchant continued by explaining the outlines of the scheme as had been drawn up on board the packet, stating, however, that all this was to be changed, if it seemed proper so to do, by vote of the assembly.

He had no more than finished when Captain Abraham Whipple entered, having the appearance of a man who has been engaged in some arduous task.

No sooner was he inside the door than some one of the party asked what had been done by way of making ready, and he replied that eight of the largest long-boats in the harbour were at Fenner's Wharf, and at that moment Cap-

tain Lindsey was engaged in fitting them out in proper fashion.

Whereupon some other person asked what Captain Whipple considered "proper fashion," while yet another inquired if any effort was being made toward collecting arms, and to both of these questions the most trusty ship-master in Providence, meaning Captain Whipple, made reply:

"I have left a party of a dozen men or more ballasting the boats with stones as large as a man can conveniently throw, and such are to be our weapons. It is hardly possible to collect muskets sufficient to arm as many as must set out, and, in my opinion, it would not be well to do so if we could. Master Brown, in whose employ I am, has seen fit to entrust me with the command of the expedition, and I believe firmly that we shall do better execution with a plentiful supply of rocks than would be possible with more deadly weapons."

Then some one laughingly asked if it was believed that the *Gaspee* could be carried by a bombardment of stones, and to this the captain replied, without hesitation:

"If the schooner lies nearly on her beam-ends, as she must, now the tide has fallen, then will it be impossible for the crew to use their heavy guns, and I question whether the men themselves will fire upon us. At all events, it is my purpose to avoid bloodshed if it may be, and the plan which I have formed seems to me to be in that line."

Then, still answering the questions which were showered upon him, the captain announced that there were

to be four oarsmen in each boat, that the rowlocks were to be muffled, and it was expected that a sufficient number of good seamen could be found to take command under the captain himself.

His eight boats, so he said, could carry, counting the men at the oars, no more than sixty-five or seventy, and since there were more than a hundred gathered in the building, and at least twenty were making ready at Fenner's Wharf, only a certain number of those present could join in the venture.

"We shall take forty-five from here," he said, "and I call upon you to decide who shall make up that number. Let those most interested in the affair step forward."

Immediately the entire company advanced toward the captain, each man insisting that he had the best right to take part in the venture, and putting forth his claim so boisterously that I began to fear we would have a fight on our hands even before we could come again within sight of the *Gaspee*.

CHAPTER IV.

UNDER WAY.

CAPTAIN ABRAHAM WHIPPLE was not a man to be intimidated, as all who have met him can testify, and at the first on-rush of those eager to be numbered among the attacking party, he stood his ground, counting on bringing into subjection the many who must perforce be left behind.

In this, however, the captain found he had made a mistake, for neither by word nor by look could he keep back those who could not, owing to lack of transportation facilities, accompany the force, and soon he was in the very midst of a throng of men grown so angry as to be incapable of reason, each of whom seemed bent on attacking the leaders of the enterprise.

As I look back now on what was done by us of Providence on the night of June 9th, in the year of grace, 1772, I realise fully that this particular portion of the venture had in it more of danger to the general plan than all which followed, for once our people began the quarrel in downright earnest, then was there every chance matters would be prolonged until the tide might have made it possible for the king's schooner to be floated, or her commander

had put his helpless vessel into such condition as might enable him to keep his foes at a respectful distance.

Captain Whipple had counted himself an able man in the game of fisticuffs, and more than once, in telling yarns of his experience at sea, had declared that he reckoned himself more than a match for fifty unarmed men, if it so be he had an opportunity to set his back against a wall,

or something which answered the same purpose, so that he might not be come at from behind.

Now, however, the captain could hardly be seen in the throng of men who gathered close about him, and Master Brown, understanding that his most trusty shipmaster was in difficulties, attempted to restore order by commanding, at the full strength of his lungs, that every man in the house should fall back.

At such a time, when the people were about to make ready their necks for the halter by attacking one of the king's vessels, Master Brown was no more than any other citizen of Providence in the estimation of the company.

I failed to see that his words made any impression, except upon a shoemaker standing near me, who cried out in reply to the merchant's command:

"This is a time when the meanest can be made to suffer as much as the highest, and, sometimes, considerably more, for I warrant you that if this night's work brings us to the scaffold, Master Brown's neck will snap like a pipe-stem, whereas I shall hold on a good ten minutes or more, gasping for breath, because of being stouter and stronger of body."

Master Dunn took a hand in the attempt to restore order, but he was brushed aside as if of no more consequence than Daniel or myself.

During a good ten minutes the throng swept first this side and then that, in their efforts to come at Captain Whipple, until Master Sabine implored them in the name of charity to remain quiet, else would they bring down his house upon their heads, and he could ill afford to build another if, peradventure, the colony of Rhode Island was to set itself in opposition to the king.

I would I might set down all that occurred at this meeting in such glowing words that he who reads could see before him the picture as it was presented to Daniel and me, who had taken refuge in the fireplace lest we come to grief amid the throng.

To me, who believed Lieutenant Duddington and his men would fight desperately to prevent their vessel from being captured, it was as if all these good citizens were clamouring for an opportunity to be shot down, and, little heeding the possible effect of the words, I shouted:

"Let all who want to be shot by King George's soldiers come this way!" and Daniel, moved by the same spirit of mischief, echoed my words.

Whether the excited men understood what was said, I cannot declare; but certain it is — and this simply goes to show into what a state of excitement the men had worked themselves — that nearly all the throng rushed toward us lads, and so it came to pass that the crew of the packet *Hannah* accomplished that which the chief merchant of Providence had failed in doing.

Captain Whipple, realising by this time, I fancy, that he was not such a wonderful man at controlling others except on the deck of his own vessel, took refuge in one corner of the room, with a dozen or more of the principal citizens, while those who surrounded Daniel and me were trying to understand what promises had been held out to them by our words.

Thoughtlessly I had aided the captain, and now was in sore distress because of having done so, since I realised that Daniel and I stood very near to a most prodigious flogging, in case the people understood that on such a momentous occasion we had ventured to play a boyish prank.

During the two or three minutes spent by the excited

throng in endeavouring to learn why all of them had suddenly come toward the fireplace, Captain Whipple and Master Brown decided upon a plan which gave promise of effecting their purpose, and these gentlemen were aided in carrying it out by the captain of the packet, who entered the room in great haste.

"The boats are ready!" he cried, in a loud voice, as if thinking that mayhap he and his portion of the work had been lost sight of in the excitement of the hour. "It is not well we allow more than sixty-four, all told, to embark on the venture, because, with the ballast of rocks, our fleet will not carry another soul. There are now at Fenner's Wharf seventeen able-bodied men; I make the eighteenth, and it is allowed you to select forty-six, but no more."

Captain Lindsey did Daniel and me a better turn than he counted on, by thus attracting the attention of the men when they were beginning to realise that a senseless trick had been played upon them, and, forgetting us lads, they rushed toward the last comer as does a flock of sheep when one of their number leads the way.

Even I, unaccustomed to such scenes, understood that unless order and discipline could be established speedily the venture would come to nought, and doubtless some such idea was in the mind of Master Brown when, shouting his loudest to attract attention, he cried:

"Listen to that information which Captain Lindsey has to impart! Do not act like children at such a time as this when men are needed, but take due heed to all the

details, and then settle among yourselves in proper fashion how we may begin the work which, perchance, will cost many lives. This venture is not one to be taken in a sportive mood, but is fraught with danger to all concerned, therefore let us reason together as should men who are like soon to encounter death."

One would have said that until this moment the people had not fully realised the danger which might come to them through the attempt to capture the *Gaspee*, for as Master Brown thus reminded them of it a hush came upon all that throng, and men ceased to strive each with the other to gain an advantage in the enlistment.

Understanding that in no better way could he effect his purpose than by picturing the consequences of such a deed as it was proposed to commit, Master Brown painted in vigorous words the possible future situation of all concerned in the undertaking, and this brought about something approaching order.

This done, Captain Whipple came to the front once more, his temper considerably ruffled by the shaking which he had received, and then made arrangements for the selection of a party for the venture; but, profiting by recent experience, he no longer attempted to bully his fellow townsmen.

"It is time we set off," he began, "for to pull from here to Namquit Point against the tide would be no child's play, and we must take advantage of the ebb if we count on arriving in season. That every one here is desirous of taking part in the destruction of that schooner which has

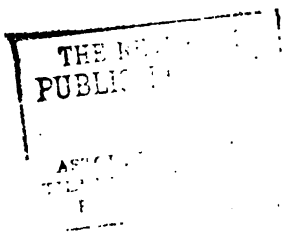
caused us so much annoyance, has already been proven, therefore I ask that all you gentlemen will stand in line, allowing those who have the most at stake to decide who shall go in the boats."

A murmur of discontent began to arise as the captain ceased, and Master Dunn, quick to see how an advantage might be gained, cried, shrilly:

"That which is done this night will be counted by the representatives of the king as treason, and he to whom such a charge can be brought home is doomed at the very least to imprisonment, therefore I beseech you let it be so arranged, in case charges are made by the officers of the government, that those who have the greatest interest in the colony, which is to say, the men who own the most property, have had a hand in this matter. I move you that Masters John Brown, Joseph Bucklin, and John Hopkins be appointed a committee of three to select from this company as many as may be needed to man the fleet, and that we abide without question by their decision."

Some of the hot-heads began to make objection to this proposition; but Captain Lindsey, understanding that now was come the moment when discipline might be enforced, cheered loudly, whereat the more respectable men of the party joined in until the voices of the grumblers were drowned in a tumult of noise.

At this moment Captain Joseph Tillinghast, who, as I afterward understood, was to command one of the boats, came into the room, and while the tumult was at its height Master Dunn spoke with him privately.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Then it was that he and Captain Whipple set about literally forcing the assembled company to form themselves in line around the four sides of the room, and after some little squabbling, which was of no great consequence, occurred, those who were in fact struggling to be known as conspirators against the king had virtually been reduced to subjection.

While this was being done Daniel said to me hurriedly, clutching my arm with a nervous grip, as if fearing I was minded to break away from him:

"We shall be left out of this sport, Justin, unless you can gain speech with Captain Josh, for none of the men will give way to lads like ourselves."

Until now I had not even suspected that we might be deprived of an opportunity to accompany the party, for it had seemed to be our right, after having laboured so hard to arouse the people, and straightway I became alarmed.

Hurriedly leaving the fireplace where we yet crouched to save ourselves from being crushed in the throng, I ran across the room to where Captain Josh was aiding Master Tillinghast to keep the men in line, and said, imploringly, but in a tone so low that others might not hear:

"Do not leave us out of the force, Captain Lindsey! Surely Daniel and I have a right to go, after all our labours, and you should stand up for your own crew."

"Ay, lad, that I will; but if it be known that we are willing to give boys the preference over men grown, then might be raised such a hubbub as would convert this company into a roaring mob, like as it was a few moments ago.

Your names need not be called, but when we set out, do you run ahead and take your places at the oars. Then it will seem as if you were among those already chosen."

I was satisfied that the captain of the packet would keep faith with us, yet doubted much whether the others might permit it, and, rejoining Daniel, thus cautioned him, after repeating what had been said by our commander:

"We must take good care, lad, to outstrip them, when the company marches to Fenner's Wharf, else shall we be left behind of a verity."

"Why not set off now, in order to make it certain that no accident can shut us out?"

It was a good suggestion, yet I was not willing to miss any portion of this most interesting scene, and urged that surely we could run faster than the men would march, therefore it might be well to hear all which was said.

The selection of a crew was made after this fashion. Each of the gentlemen who had planned the venture called in turn the name of some one person, those so elected stepping into the middle of the room, until the full number was made up, and then, as it seemed to me, not more than one third of those present had been chosen.

I anticipated no little trouble from such of the company as were to be debarred from the venture, and in this I was not mistaken.

Immediately the required number had been told off, there arose a cry of dissatisfaction, and again did it appear as if the enterprise was doomed to failure because of too much zealousness.

At this point, however, Captain Whipple showed himself to be a wise commander, for while those who had not been named were squabbling with the merchants, each trying to prove why he above all others should have been selected, the three captains present formed the attacking party into line, marching them directly out of the building.

Now was come the time when Daniel and I must make good speed to Fenner's Wharf, and we set off, although it would have pleased me right well had I been able to learn how Masters Brown, Dunn, and the others succeeded in making their peace.

We lads ran at our best pace, taking a short cut across Deacon Black's garden in order to come out into the street ahead of the party, and thus contrive to gain the rendezvous sufficiently in advance of the force to take our places in the boats as oarsmen.

We had four or five minutes in which to look about us, and I saw, to my great surprise, that the success of the expedition was not to depend entirely upon such missiles as rocks.

Every person on board the fleet of boats had either by his side a musket, or in his belt one or more pistols, and when the party selected from among those at Master Sabine's came down on the dock, I observed that during the march each had supplied himself well with weapons.

It perplexed me, who had believed that the venture was to be made as mapped out by Master Brown, and I said as much to Daniel, who then gave proof that he was keener of observation than myself.

"I saw near the door of Master Sabine's house, as we came out, a stack of muskets, which some one must have gathered while the meeting was being held, and also observed that many of those present, particularly Masters Brown and Dunn, and Captains Whipple and Lindsey, carried pistols in their belts. I warrant you these rocks were put aboard more to blind those of Providence who believe the king can do no wrong, than to be used in the attack."

"Then it is indeed to be war!" I cried, as the cold chills of fear ran up and down my spine, and Daniel nodded his head as if such had been his idea from the first.

Now I was ever eager to join in anything which promised sport, and with just enough danger mixed in to make it exciting; but the idea of fighting with powder and ball against those whom we knew were well armed, was rather more than I had reckoned on.

In fact I grew cowardly, although not for the world itself would I have admitted that such was the fact, and my teeth chattered as if on a frosty night when, while the men took their places in the boats, I saw each in turn dispose of the weapons he carried, in such fashion that they could most readily be come at.

If I had been but a little less eager; if I had neglected to act upon Daniel's suggestion, then would we two lads have been debarred from going on this most perilous expedition, and again and again I called myself a goose to have strained every effort to gain a position in which of a verity I did not belong.

However, it was too late now to cry baby, unless I was minded that all present should call me one, and I held my peace, mentally promising to take revenge on Daniel, if it so be we came to any serious harm, for, save he had prompted me, I would most likely have been thrust aside out of all this turmoil.

Each boat carried four oarsmen, and the rowlocks were muffled. A fifth oar lay on the stern-sheets to be used by the helmsman, and I observed, even amid my fears, that Captain Lindsey had succeeded in finding shipmasters enough so that every craft had one on board as captain.

Now Daniel and I had taken our places without giving heed to anything save that we each held an oar, which was a token that we had been regularly chosen members of the party, and I found yet greater cause for alarm when I learned that chance had led us into the boat which was to be commanded by Captain Whipple.

Ours, so to speak, was the flagship of the squadron, and we might count with certainty that she would be well in advance when the attack was made.

"We are like to find ourselves in the thickest of it," I whispered to Daniel, when Captain Whipple had taken his seat in the stern-sheets and thrown out an oar as a rudder. "Being in the same boat with the commander of the expedition, it stands to reason that we shall receive the first volley from those on board the *Gaspee*."

Because I myself was a coward in this affair, it gave me no little pleasure to note that Daniel appeared decidedly

uneasy on hearing these words, for now I understood that he, like myself, had failed to count the danger fully when we made up our minds to be of the party, and I wondered how many more were in the same mental condition.

"Think you Master Brown was in earnest when he proposed that we come without weapons, or was it understood among the leaders that every man should be armed, and the proposition was made only to blind the eyes of those who might not favour the venture?" Daniel whispered to me, for we sat on the same thwart, and could readily converse without being overheard.

"I am of the mind that all this had been arranged beforehand, for some one must have collected the muskets which you saw at Master Sabine's house. It would be no more than natural that every man who owned a pistol should bring one with him; but the remainder of the business goes to show that our leaders believe there is fighting ahead, otherwise the order would be given now, before it is too late, to send the weapons ashore."

"I think it would be more to our credit, Justin, if we were with Seth on board the *Hannah* at this minute, for however highly we may prize ourselves, you and I are but lads among a party of men, which is much the same as saying that we are out of place."

There was no longer any question but that Daniel's thoughts and mine ran in the same channel, and, emboldened by his timorousness, so to speak, I looked about to see if peradventure there might not be an opportunity for

us to step ashore at this moment without being set down as cowards.

A hundred men or more stood on the wharf watching the embarkation, and among the throng were many who had cried out loudly against the injustice of leaving them behind at such a time; but now, having seen that which we lads observed, never one of them raised his voice in protest against the selection made.

I called out to Master Fines, the ship-caulker, who had been among the most noisy at Master Sabine's house, hoping that on thus attracting attention to myself he would claim the right to take my place, on the point of age if nothing more.

He did no such thing, however. When it was a question of fighting with rocks only, he had been eager to take part, most likely believing the crew of the *Gaspee* would not fire upon unarmed men; but, having seen the collection of weapons, his desire to win glory had suddenly departed.

As with him so with the others. Never a man insisted that it was his right to take the place of this or that one who was already in the boats, and I had good reason to believe that among the party were many who, like myself, would have stepped on shore had it been possible to do so without exciting ridicule.

Mayhap some such idea as this was in Captain Whipple's mind, and he feared lest by delaying the start he might lose some of his recruits, for he hastened the embarkation of those citizens who had taken the most active part in arranging for the venture, and once they were on board word was given to put off.

There was one fact which heartened me considerably when the company was afloat, and this was the number of prominent men of Providence which we had among us.

Captains Abraham Whipple, Joseph Tillinghast, and Joshua Lindsey were among the ablest shipmasters on Narragansett Bay. Masters John Brown, John Hopkins, Benjamin Dunn, and Joseph Bucklin were the leading merchants. John Mawney, who could claim the title of doctor because his medical studies were well-nigh at an end, was present as surgeon, and his people stood among the richest in the neighbourhood.

Then came Benjamin Page, Turpin Smith, Ephraim Bowen, and four or five others of such character as gave an air of respectability to the whole affair, for if our chief citizens were setting out on this venture, then was it of consequence to the colony rather than the doings of an irresponsible rabble.

CHAPTER V.

THE ATTACK.

BEFORE we had been under way a quarter of an hour I began to understand that Daniel and I would pay dearly for our privilege of being shot at by the crew of the *Gaspee.*

The boats were the largest to be found in the river, and each carried eight men, therefore one can have a very good idea of the labour which the oarsmen must perform before we could come to Namquit Point. It is true we had the tide with us; but it seemed to me, as I tugged at the heavy ashen blade, that we received but little benefit from it, and in order to keep our proper place in the squadron it was necessary we lads work to the utmost of our power.

It was a good ten miles or more to the point, and, owing to the time spent in deciding upon the details of the venture, we did not get away until half an hour after ten o'clock, therefore was it of considerable importance that we ply the oars vigorously in order to arrive before the tide should turn.

Now it was that I observed a certain fact which surprised me not a little. We had in our boat three of the

men who had cried out the loudest in support of their claims to be chosen as members of the expedition, and had bragged the most regarding what they could and would do.

Once we were under way, these loud-spoken individuals who had claimed that it was within their power to set the world on fire, had very little to say; in fact, they appeared to be quite as timorous as either Daniel or myself, and I have set it down in my mind, having since learned it to be true, that he who talks the loudest is the most timorous at heart, which is but another way of saying that "barking dogs seldom bite."

Captain Whipple, on whom the success or failure of the enterprise devolved, did his best at heartening us by explaining in what position we would most likely find the *Gaspee*, now that the tide was low, and made light of the chances that her crew would put up a very spirited resistance.

At the same time he took good care our boat should lead the others by at least a dozen yards, and I said to myself, with no very great pleasure in the thought, that it was quite probable we would receive the brunt of the fire, in case resistance was made, before the remainder of the fleet could be in position to aid us.

It is no more than right, however, that after crying myself down and owning frankly to being timorous, I should take some little credit for holding my fears in check, which I did by resolutely putting from me all thoughts of what might be near at hand.

Perhaps it was well for me that I acted as one of the oarsmen, for by such labour I could the better prevent my cowardly thoughts from coming to the surface, and I bent all my efforts to pulling in man-of-war fashion, feathering the oar carefully and setting it into the water without a splash, all of which served to banish, for the time being, unwelcome ideas and forebodings of evil.

In order lest I set down what was of but little importance in this venture, and fail of giving due credit to those who designed and carried it out, I will make no further mention of that long and tedious voyage, during which time my mind was filled with many disagreeable fancies, save to say that nearly three hours elapsed from the time of our departure until we were come within sight of the *Gaspee.*

It must not be supposed that during all this while we were steadily rowing. In order to give the oarsmen an opportunity to rest, and also to make certain his party was not losing courage, Captain Whipple had halted us no less than four times, bringing the boats side by side on each occasion to give the men a chance to discuss the proposed proceedings among themselves, when they might be able to lend each other a certain amount of stout-heartedness.

We found the king's schooner lying nearly on her beam-ends, well up on the point; but now that the tide had begun to flow there was sufficient water around her for us to pull close alongside, and when this had been learned Captain Whipple ordered the boats in line once more.

Then, rowing up and down in front of them as a militia officer marches to and fro before his command, the captain said, in a low tone, yet sufficiently loud for all of our party to hear:

"The success of this enterprise depends upon the first movements. We must pull swiftly up on the schooner, as if confident of our ability to take possession, else will her crew grow bold, thinking we may be afraid. It is not beyond the range of possibility that they will open fire on first sighting us; but our duty is to advance steadily, without paying any attention whatsoever to their movements. In case we are forced to fight for the possession of the *Gaspee*, it must be done on her decks, and not from these boats. I will lead the way, and my crew will have gained a foothold on the schooner before the remainder of you can come up. Thus, if you would aid your comrades, lose no time in following, and once on deck, grapple with whomsoever may oppose you. It is the desire of those who have this matter in charge that we effect the capture of the vessel with as little of bloodshed as may be allowed."

Having said this, he swung our boat around with one sweep of the steering-oar, and said to us, in a low tone:

"Now, boys, drive it to her hard! Shut your ears to the reports of the weapons which they may discharge, and remember that he who would not be pointed out in Providence as a coward, must take good care to keep close at my heels!"

I was perspiring as under the noonday sun, and the

bead-like drops brought out by fear trickled down my body until it was as if a pail of water had been emptied on my head.

Daniel bent over his oar, saying nothing, not even so much as looking at me, and I could understand full well all that was in the poor fellow's mind.

We pulled our best at the oars until having arrived within perhaps fifty yards of the schooner, when suddenly a voice cried:

"Boat ahoy! Keep off, or I'll fire!"

"That is only the sentinel," Captain Whipple half whispered. "Pay no attention to him, but pull for dear life! There isn't one chance in an hundred that he can fire with such aim as to send a bullet aboard."

We obeyed orders, literally tugging on the oars, as if some great reward was promised in case we arrived at the goal a certain number of seconds before any of our fleet, and while doing so the crack of a musket rang out on the still air, sounding to my ears as loud as the roar of a cannon, and again came the sentinel's hail:

"Boat ahoy! Keep off, or we shall fire into you!"

Even then, frightened as I was by the possibility of

speedily being engaged in a regular battle, I observed that two or three of the boats were hanging back; that they no longer advanced in a straight line as when we left them, and there was no need for me to question why this was so.

Our boat, forced on by the united and violent efforts of four oarsmen, glided over the water swiftly, a fine jet of spray leaping up from her bow, and, thinking we must be close aboard the enemy, I turned my head.

Just at that instant a man, having on nothing but a shirt, leaped upon the starboard rail of the schooner, as he shouted:

"Keep back! Cease rowing, or I'll fire!"

It was Lieutenant Duddington, as we knew right well, having heard his disagreeable voice many a time before, and Captain Whipple whispered, hoarsely:

"Drive it to her, lads, and we shall carry all before us!"

Involuntarily I crouched lower over the oar, knowing full well that the lieutenant would keep his word, and before I could have counted five there came two reports almost at the same instant.

I heard the bullets whistling over my head, and then from the boat next astern of us I saw leap up a tiny flame with a white puff of a cloud above it, and again I heard the singing of a bullet.

It was followed by a cry of pain, and some one on board the schooner, most likely the sentinel who had first hailed us, cried out to those below:

"On deck here! The lieutenant is killed!"

Some one had disobeyed orders, for we had been instructed to give no heed to any fire from the schooner, but continue straight on until we were alongside, and I wondered at the instant if this disobedience might not cost us dearly.

Immediately afterward came the terrible fact, as it seemed from the cry of the sentinel, that some one of our party had killed a man, and all of us were, in a greater or less degree, responsible for what could be little less than murder.

Then it was that Captain Whipple dropped the steering-oar and ran forward, leaping from thwart to thwart, as he said sharply, to those in the bow:

"Lay hold, lads, to make the craft fast! Cease rowing, and follow me!"

We had come up between the shore and the stranded schooner, therefore, as she was lying nearly on her beam-ends, we had simply to make fast to the half-submerged rail, and clamber up the incline of the deck.

Simply that; but before gaining the companion-ways, we knew that the crew would fire on us, and he who succeeded in gaining a foothold on those sloping planks, would do so more by good luck than good wit.

I could see what appeared to me in my excited frame of mind, a regular mob of men come forth from cabin and forecastle; I heard Captain Whipple cry out for us to follow him, and saw that two more of our boats were alongside.

Then we were in the thick of a battle, exposed to even more danger from friends than foes.

Scrambling toward the after companion-way directly behind Captain Whipple, and forgetting, strangely enough, all my timorousness, a rock struck the deck close beside me, and then another, and another, in rapid succession.

It was this which aroused me to anger, causing all my fears to flee as I cried out against those idiots in the boats who were pelting us with missiles while we strove to maintain our footing.

The English sailors came at us, some with belaying-pins, others with cutlasses, and not a few with muskets.

How many shots were fired by the crew of the *Gaspee* I am unable to say of my own knowledge, because of the anger and excitement which prevented me from taking careful note of what was going on near by.

I know, however, that at least six or eight shots were fired, whether from the schooner's crew or our people in the boats it is impossible to say.

That of which I was most keenly conscious was that those faint-hearted villains of our party who dared not follow us as we boarded the schooner, were pitching rock after rock on to the deck with as much chance of wounding a friend as an enemy.

I had as weapon my oar; but to swing it around with any effect while making my way up the incline of the slippery planks was impossible, and the only use I made of the unwieldy weapon was to strike aside the rocks, as one bats a ball, otherwise my head might have been crushed.

By this time a dozen of the men from Providence were between me and the after companion-way, where the enemy stood in greatest numbers, and it seemed of more importance to check our people in their folly than to lend my feeble aid in rushing upon the Englishmen.

Therefore it was I turned and shouted at the full strength of my lungs:

"Stop pitching those rocks aboard, you cowardly fools! Can't you understand by this time that you are doing vastly more damage to friends than to foes?"

Then I heard Master Dunn, who was evidently in one of the hindermost boats, shouting for the men to withhold their fire, and once more I turned to make my way up the deck.

Daniel was just in advance of me, crawling on his hands and knees that he might advance more rapidly, and when I wheeled about, a man, whether wounded or sound I could not say, slid down the deck as if he had been hurled directly at our heads.

In the merest fraction of time I understood that this must be one of the schooner's crew who, having been knocked down by our people, was coming upon us against his will; but there was no time to avoid the shock, and the fellow bowled us off the deck like ninepins, I managing to catch him by the throat as we struck the water.

Luckily the tide had risen no more than two or three feet, and it was only necessary to stand erect in order to bring our heads above the surface, when the Englishman

and I began a fight which would most like have ended in my discomfiture but for Daniel's assistance.

The fellow strove to hold my head beneath the surface, but during the few seconds I fought with him it was possible to hear cries from every direction, as if all our people were engaged with the foe, and above the din I made out Captain Whipple's voice as he shouted for the young doctor, thereby giving me to understand that Mawney was needed to care for some one who had been wounded.

The Englishman who tried to throttle me was a sailor twice my weight, and had greatly the advantage, inasmuch as both his hands were clasped around my throat; but Daniel came quickly to the rescue.

As soon as he scrambled out of the water, the lad ran a short distance up the slope of the deck, and then leaped down upon my adversary with such good effect that all three of us disappeared beneath the surface again; but when we came up the fellow's clutch upon my throat had been broken.

It would have taken a good fighter to hold in check two lads like Daniel and myself, who had been knocked about on the packet until we were hardly more than bone and muscle, and in a twinkling we had this particular member of the *Gaspee's* crew under our control.

"Shall we kill him?" Daniel asked, savagely, for the fever of battle was upon him, and I question if the lad really knew what he said.

"Do you count on murdering a man after he has surrendered?" the sailor asked in alarm, for I fancy that he,

judging from our methods of fighting, must have thought the schooner was beset by a lot of wild cats.

As a matter of course, we made no attempt to take his life; but now that he had yielded as prisoner, I was wholly at a loss to know what should be done, and there, bracing ourselves on the port rail, the three of us remained, wondering what was the proper procedure in such a case.

No more than five minutes had been spent, from the time when our prisoner was hurled down like a rock upon us, before he had surrendered, and in that time, as it appeared, we from Providence had gained possession of the *Gaspee*.

That which I had believed must be a bloody battle was hardly more than an ordinary brawl, and yet we had, as spoils of war, the king's schooner and her crew.

I learned afterward, that is to say, while we were destroying the *Gaspee*, that the crew yielded almost immediately after Captain Whipple gained the companion-way, where he found Lieutenant Duddington lying grievously wounded.

The struggle in which Daniel and I took part was the result of an accident rather than intention on the part of the Englishman, for he had slipped while attempting to dodge one of the heavy rocks, and, coming down upon us involuntarily, could do no less than defend himself.

The greater part of the schooner's crew had retreated into the forecastle or the hold when Captain Whipple carried their wounded commander below, and once our

people understood this fact, there went up such shouts of triumph as must have been heard many miles away.

The work which had been begun by the *Hannah*, when she enticed the *Gaspee* ashore, was finished in the most satisfactory manner, and without any bloodshed on our side.

In the triumph of the moment we overlooked the fact that possibly we might have taken the life of him who was, in fact, responsible for the attack.

While we stood there in possession of the deck, waiting to hear some word from Captain Whipple regarding the condition of the lieutenant, Tom Bucklin, son of Master Joseph Bucklin, came up excitedly to where I was standing near the after companion-way, and said, in a voice quivering with emotion:

"Where is Lieutenant Duddington? Do you think he is hurt so very much?"

I was surprised that this lad, for he was not yet of legal age, should be so concerned, when the remainder of our company were almost heedless, regarding the extent of the injury inflicted by us, and instead of replying to the question, asked:

"Why does it concern you so nearly, lad? Young Mawney is dressing the wound, and I'll venture to say that between him and Captain Whipple the thing is done properly."

"But it was I who fired the shot!" Tom cried, gripping me by the hands until only with difficulty could I prevent myself from crying out because of the pain. "It may be, Justin Jacobs, that I am at this moment a murderer!"

"Go into the cabin and see for yourself how the man is getting along," I replied, sympathising fully with my friend in the time of his trouble, for surely to have the blood of a human being on one's hands must be more horrible than is possible to imagine.

He clambered across the deck to the companion-way, disappearing below the hatch, and I, following a moment later, saw him working feverishly to aid Doctor Mawney in dressing the wound.

One would have supposed that the lieutenant, who had looked upon us of Narragansett Bay as if we were cattle not worthy of common civility, would have cried out in rage against those who dared to fire upon his sacred person; but, instead, he was as meek as any lamb while under the hands of Mawney and Bucklin, and spoke them fairly as if they were indeed his equals.

I could hardly credit the fact that this was the arrogant, insolent officer who would stagger through the streets of Providence or Newport as if he alone in the colony had a right to hold up his head, and my surprise was little less than astonishment when, the wound having been dressed, he courteously asked Doctor Mawney to take from a certain locker in his cabin a gold stock-buckle.

Mawney did as he was requested, and my eyes must have literally bulged out from their sockets when the lieutenant begged the young fellow to receive the ornament from him as a token of gratitude for the services rendered.

Gratitude to Mawney, who was a member of the company that had wounded him, perhaps unto death!

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However, much to my satisfaction and delight, the gift was refused, and then the lieutenant directed that a silver buckle be taken from the locker. This he pressed on the young doctor so earnestly that the latter finally accepted it, while Tom Bucklin stood near by, the tears rolling down his cheeks, for he too was exceedingly grateful, understanding by this time that the wound he inflicted was not mortal.

CHAPTER VI.

DESTROYING THE GASPEE.

CAPTAIN WHIPPLE went on deck as soon as Mawney began to dress the wound inflicted by Tom Bucklin, and when I next turned my attention from the occupants of the cabin to what might be going on around me, I saw that our commander was making ready to take advantage of the victory he had won.

Acting under his orders, the crew of the schooner were gathering their belongings from below, stowing them in the boats, and I, not understanding the meaning of such movement, asked of Master Dunn, who was standing close beside me, why this was being done.

"What did you believe would be done with the schooner in case, as has happened, we captured her?" he asked, with a hearty laugh, and I replied, like a stupid:

"I never figured out the matter so far ahead, sir. Is she to be left lying here?"

"How would we advantage by what has been done, in such case? We have captured the *Gaspee*, my lad, in order to prevent her from interfering with us, and we may make certain of that only by seeing to it that she never floats again."

"Then you mean to destroy her?" and I gazed in open-mouthed astonishment at the merchant, for to break up or burn one of the king's vessels seemed to me a more serious affair than had been our attack.

"That is what we surely count on doing, my boy. After the crew have gathered up their belongings, we will let them take to their own boats, and there should be ammunition enough on board this craft to shatter her so completely that she will never be of service again, save as fire-wood."

As a matter of course I did not venture to remonstrate against such proceedings, although I was filled with fear concerning the result, for of a verity the king would bear down heavily upon those who thus wilfully destroyed his property.

I did not then have sufficient common sense to understand that the capture and destruction of the *Gaspee* meant far more than appeared on the surface. It was the lesson, not the deed itself, on which our leaders relied, and before many years had passed I realised full well that the purpose had been accomplished.

To me, the oddest thing of all was, that the crew of the schooner did not appear to cherish any hard feelings against our people because of what had been done. When the sailors were told that they might gather up all their belongings before being set on shore, a dozen or more of our party set about aiding in the loading of the boats, and one would have said all hands had been shipmates for years.

Lieutenant Duddington's crew knew we were about to destroy their vessel, yet never a harsh word was spoken, and so jolly were the king's sailors that I really felt right sorry when they pulled away in the schooner's boats, because I was not like to see them again.

No sooner had the seamen left us, counting on making their way to Newport as one of the petty officers advised, than Captain Whipple gave the word to make ready a boat for Lieutenant Duddington, which we did by packing into it a feather bed from one of the cabins aft, and piling it high with pillows.

Four of our shipmasters brought the wounded man out, and made him as comfortable as was possible, acting all the while under directions of young Mawney, to whom was given the title of "doctor" as if he had already really earned it.

Another boat had been brought alongside, and into this last craft was put all the lieutenant's belongings, together with the dunnage claimed by his officers; then, accompanied by Tom Bucklin, young Mawney, and the four petty officers of the schooner, our victim was set ashore.

A dozen of our party had been detailed to carry the wounded man and the baggage to the nearest dwelling, after which they were to return to the point, and no sooner had the party set off than Captain Whipple, Master Brown, and half a dozen more, began making preparations to destroy the *Gaspee*.

There were many articles of value which some of us would have been only too well pleased to take away; but

Master Dunn stood guard to prevent anything of the kind, saying stoutly, whenever one of the bolder members of the party argued that it was a wicked waste to destroy so much which would be of value to us:

"We left Providence for the sole purpose of destroying this vessel, and nothing more. It is not allowed that you shall steal anything from her. If a single article, no matter how trifling in value, is taken on shore, it shall be delivered up to Lieutenant Duddington. We are law-abiding citizens who are attempting to right the wrongs put upon us by the king's servants, and not murderers or thieves."

Well, to make a long story short, we collected all the ammunition to be found around the decks, and carried it to the magazine. Then a fire of light wood was built in the hold, amidships, and we pulled off to a distance of at least half a mile, having with us nothing whatsoever save that which we brought, although it was afterward charged that we had captured the *Gaspee* for the sole purpose of plundering her.

We had not long to wait before the fire spread to the magazine, the doors of which had been left open, and ten minutes or more before sunrise the explosion took place.

We saw the hull of the schooner open, as it were, revealing for the merest fraction of time a mass of fire, and then the entire fabric rose in the air, throwing flame and sparks in every direction while one might have counted ten.

Then all was dense blackness as the burning fragments

fell in the river, and the *Gaspee* had been destroyed so completely that nevermore would she trouble us of Narragansett Bay.

During perhaps twenty seconds after, we were shrouded by the blackness that seemed doubly dense because of the blinding flash which had dazzled our eyes, and then Captain Whipple shouted:

"All hands for home, lads! We've accomplished that for which we came, and done it in proper fashion. Now, three cheers for ourselves! One, two, three!"

The cheers were given, but in a half-hearted manner, and then the fleet was headed for home, our boat leading the way as when we came down; but, to my surprise, I felt none of that elation which I believed would come in event of our destroying the *Gaspee*.

Without knowing exactly why, I was downhearted, dispirited, and it appeared very much as if all my companions were in very nearly the same frame of mind.

It was odd, indeed, that we who were the victors

should return after the fashion of people who have been beaten.

It was near eight o'clock in the morning when we were come within sight of home, and then Captain Whipple shouted for all the boats to pull up to his. When the command had been obeyed, and our party were where each member might hear what was said, our commander gave us this caution :

"That which has been done this night will bring the king's officers down upon us as soon as the matter is noised about. It is necessary for your own welfare that you keep secret the names of those who have made the venture. Land here, so that no friend to the king's officers can say he saw us come ashore at Providence, and keep close tongues in your head, as you value liberty ! "

This was to be the end of our fine venture, when we were to do such deeds as would make our names famous.

We were to skulk back to our homes, and, once there, deny having taken part in the lesson given to the king and his ministers !

Then Master Brown explained more fully just why it was necessary to deny all share in the work, and we went ashore nearly two miles below the town, as if having been engaged in some disreputable piece of work.

Next morning the *Hannah* set out on her regular trip to New York, and when we arrived at that port, eight and forty hours later, we saw posted in the inns and other public places, a proclamation signed by Governor Wanton, in which he offered a reward of five hundred dollars for

the discovery of those who had had a hand in the destruction of the *Gaspee*, the money to be paid immediately after the conviction of one or more of the "miscreants."

That which we had done literally set New York by the ears, and during the time our schooner remained in port we heard little else spoken of save the capture and burning of the king's ship.

Many of our people declared that the citizens of Providence had done good service in the "cause of liberty," which was being talked about no little at this time; but yet a larger number insisted that it was an outrage which should be judged severely by all honest citizens.

As I told Daniel and old Seth, it was hard to decide whether we had performed a good deed for the colony, or if we were really murderers and thieves, as some of the most radical declared.

When we were come to Providence again, it was almost as if the *Gaspee* had never been destroyed, so far as our people were concerned, for not a man, save a few hot-headed royalists, would discuss the affair even with his best friend, and Tom Bucklin actually looked at me in open-mouthed astonishment when I whispered the question in his ear as to how he got home after going ashore with Lieutenant Duddington. One would really have supposed that he had no idea as to what I meant.

Then came a proclamation from the king, showing that the government in England were astir because of our doings.

A reward of five thousand dollars was offered for information leading to the identity of him who had led the

party on the night when the *Gaspee* was destroyed, and two thousand five hundred dollars to any one who would give the names of the others in the company, with a free pardon if the informer should be one who had had a hand in the affair.

In addition to this, a Commission of Inquiry was established, for the purpose of discovering the "miscreants," and the following gentlemen were named as members of this court:

"Governor Joseph Wanton of Rhode Island; Daniel Horsmanden, chief justice of New York; Frederic Smyth, chief justice of New Jersey; Peter Oliver, chief justice of Massachusetts; and Robert Auchmuty, judge of the vice admiralty court."

How about that for an array of names? One would think that ours was a crime against the peace and goodwill of England as well as the American colonies, and for many months I lived in fear and trembling lest the secret should be revealed by some member of the party who valued money more than he did his own honour.

No man turned informer, however, and now, after our country is freed from the rule of the king, I can understand that what we of Providence did on the 9th of June, in the year of grace 1772, had a certain influence upon certain of the colonies when the time came to decide how great a sacrifice should be made in the effort to throw off the yoke which oppressed us so sorely.

THE END.